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ABSTRACT

Defining oral history as a method of inquiry by which the memories of individuals are elicited, preserved in interview transcripts or on tape recordings, and then used to enrich understanding of individuals' lives and the events in which they participated, this annotated bibliography provides a broad overview and a sampling of the resources available to researchers and practitioners interested in oral history. The citations are divided into six topics: guides for developing oral history projects; biographical research using oral history; using oral history as a teaching tool; oral history and the elderly; oral history and family heritage; and popular books using oral history. (NKA)

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ORAL HISTORY

An Annotated Bibliography

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Oral history is a method of inquiry by which the memories of individuals are elicited, preserved on tape recordings (and sometimes in interview transcripts), and then used to enrich understanding of peoples' lives and the events in which they participated. Oral history has been applied in a variety of research endeavors, ranging along a continuum that includes biographical, family, institutional, community, national, and international studies. It has been used as a means for elementary and secondary school instruction, as a therapeutic experience for both interviewees and interviewers, and as a supplement to traditional historical sources, one that provides a sense of immediacy that goes beyond the written record. This bibliography is an attempt to provide only a broad overview and a sampling of the innumerable resources available to researchers and practitioners interested in oral history.

Guides for Developing Oral History Projects

Braum, Willa K. Oral History for the Local Historical Society. Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1971.
An excellent overall introduction for community and college-level use of oral history. It contains interviewing strategy and advice on legal considerations for the oral historian.

_____. Transcribing and Editing Oral History. Nashville, TN: Association for State and Local History, 1977.
This volume describes how to preserve oral memoirs in written form. It includes a brief recording of an interview and that same interview transcribed.

Curtiss, Richard D., Gary L. Shumway, and Shirley E. Stephenson, eds. A Guide for Oral History Programs. Fullerton: Oral History Program, California State University, 1973.
This volume contains articles on various aspects of oral history by well-known practitioners. Appended are forms, guidelines, procedures, and a catalog of the holdings of the Fullerton program--one of the best organized in the country.

Davis, Cullom, Kathryn Black, and Kay Maclean. Oral History: From Tape to Type. Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 1977.
This guide covers both oral history interviewing and processing tapes into written formats. It is especially useful for creating ongoing oral history programs. Many exercises for classroom assignments are included.

Hoopes, James. Oral History: An Introduction for Students. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1979.
This book is an excellent introduction for college students who wish to write a paper based on oral history data. Chapters on personality, culture, and society suggest frameworks for approaching such projects. Practical advice on interviewing, writing the paper, and legal/ethical matters is included. A good survey and bibliography of oral history projects are offered at the end.

Ives, Edward D. The Tape-Recorded Interview: A Manual for Field Workers in Folklore and Oral History. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1980.
This is an exceptionally thorough and useful how-to manual for gathering oral history data. It provides start-to-finish specific practical advice on everything from using tape-recorders, through interviewing, to processing the tapes afterwards. Sample forms, used at the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral history are appended. This is particularly informative about interviewing "common folks," handling group interviews, and using photographs or other visual materials during interviews.

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Moss, William W. Oral History Program Manual. New York: Praeger, 1974.
The author is director of the John F. Kennedy Library's oral history program, and this book is based on his experience with it--an exemplary large program. The theory of oral history and a step-by-step description for handling tapes are included.

Oral History Association publications include the following:

Oral History Association Newsletter, 1967- .
This is a quarterly publication which summarizes the activities of the O.H.A., regional and state associations, the program of the annual meeting, recent grants, and publications related to oral history--an invaluable way to keep up with a rapidly growing field.

Oral History Review, 1973- .
This annual journal presents the most significant colloquia presentations from the OHA annual conference, as well as other articles and reviews pertinent to oral history research.

Oral History Evaluation Guidelines, 1980.
This is a report (14pp.) of a major conference of leaders in oral history research. Included are specific goals and guidelines for conducting and evaluating an oral history project. Questions are provided in outline form for an evaluator to use when assessing: how well a project was planned, the interview content, the interview process, ethical and legal considerations, and the mode of processing the tapes and/or transcripts. A bibliography and list of Oral History Association evaluators are appended.

Copies of the Guidelines and back issues and subscriptions to the periodicals are available from the Oral History Association, P.O. Box 13734, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas 76203.

Shumway, Gary L., and William G. Hartley. An Oral History Primer. Salt Lake City: Primer Publications, 1973.

These authors draw upon the Mormon tradition of maintaining family histories to provide an easily used set of outlines for interviewing and maintaining oral history collections.

Starr, Louis. "Oral History." Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science, Volume 20. New York, NY: Marcel Dekker, Inc., 1977, pp. 440-463.
This is an especially well-written summary of the history of oral history, its nature, and its current status by a founding father of the field at Columbia University.

Thompson, Paul. The Voice of the Past: Oral History. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1978.
This book covers the historiography and methodology of oral history quite thoroughly. Contains a useful chapter on interviewing and an appendix of model questions for biographical interviews.

Biographical Research Using Oral History

Bertaux, Daniel, ed. Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE, 1981.
This book provides a set of readings by researchers who use oral histories to investigate primarily sociological questions. Epistemological and methodological issues are examined and many examples of studies are provided. Authors are mostly European. The overriding orientation is social interactionism, but Marxist, cultural anthropology, psychohistory, and historical social psychology approaches also are taken.

Cottle, Thomas J. "Private Lives and Public Accounts." Biography, 1 (1978), 23-40.
Discusses the assets and liabilities inherent in doing so-called life study research, particularly the problems of research work with people of distinctly different backgrounds from the researcher.

Faris, David E. "Narrative Form and Oral History." International Journal of Oral History, 1 (1980), 159-180.
Narrative form and the nature of memory exemplified in various oral histories are used as the basis for discussion of oral history methodologies. Problems of inaccuracy and omission are considered in depth. ERIC EJ 237 622.

Freeman, William H. "Some Reflections on the Problems of Oral Biographical Research." Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the North American Society for Sport History (Eugene, OR, June 1976) ERIC ED 184 976.
Problems for the biographical researcher in conducting oral interviews with primary sources are discussed. Examples are touching on personal or controversial areas, reactions to tape recorders, and interviewers or interviewee biases toward subject matter.

Grele, Ronald J., ed. Envelopes of Sound. Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1975.
This book contains transcripts of frank and insightful discussions among outstanding oral history practitioners, such as Studs Turkel, Dennis Tedlock, Saul Benison, and others regarding their experiences while studying diverse cultures. Issues such as the role of the oral history interviewer vis-a-vis the subject, the variable nature of memory, and the effect of social class on the interview process are raised and examined.

Pachter, Marc, ed. Telling Lives: The Biographer's Art. Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1979.
This is an anthology about the processes of gathering and synthesizing data about a biographical subject. One chapter, by Theodore Rosengarten, describes learning experiences he encountered while doing oral history research on a heroic sharecropper/political activist in Alabama.

Using Oral History as a Teaching Tool

Clark, E. Culpepper, Michael J. Hyde, and Eva M. McMahan. "Developing Instruction in Oral History: A New Avenue for Speech Communication." Communication Education, 30 (July, 1981), 238-44. ERIC EJ 252 080
Besides advocating the inclusion of oral history in speech curricula, these authors suggest that students see each interview as a hermeneutical process. They discuss how interview communication can be analyzed in terms of the participants' understanding, interpretation and meaning of both the historical events discussed and their own interaction.

Farrell, Edmund J. "Oral Histories as Living Literature." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English (70th, Cincinnati, OH, November 21-26, 1980) ERIC ED 196 013.
This paper describes how oral history projects can be integrated into the language arts classroom. They can provide experiences in interviewing, writing, editing, and oral interpretation so that students learn that everyone has a story to tell and a personal heritage to be preserved.

Mehaffy, George L. Oral History in the Classroom. Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies, 1979. ERIC ED 178 420. (Available from EDRS in microfiche only.)
This booklet is designed to help social studies teachers initiate classroom oral history projects, such as the life history, the family history, community social history, and field research into community political life and community folklore.

Meyer, Barbara, ed. Kaleidoscope 20: Oral History in the Classroom. Boston, MA: Massachusetts State Dept. of Education, 1980. ERIC ED 195 485.
This publication discusses oral history, its potential as a teaching tool, and its application in a variety of different classroom situations from elementary through post-secondary levels. Examples of specific school projects are provided.

Neuenschwander, John A. Oral History as a Teaching Approach. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1976.
This handbook suggests how oral history projects can be incorporated into social studies and language arts classes in junior and senior high schools.

Options in Education, Program No. 80, May 30, 1977. Learning from the Past: Oral History. Washington, D.C.: George Washington University Institute for Educational Leadership. ERIC ED 141 256. (Available from EDRS in microfiche only.)
This is a transcript of a National Public Radio program that describes and provides examples of numerous kinds of oral history, such as folk telling, family interviews, social history, and sound portraits.

Oral History and the Elderly

Back, Kurt W. Life-Course: Integrative Theories and Exemplary Populations. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980.
This book contains several articles concerning the use of oral history for conducting research on stages of development over the entire life-span of adults. Included are several chapters on how recounting one's life history can be an illuminating and gratifying experience.

Butler, Robert A. "Successful Aging and the Role of the Life Review." Journal of the American Geriatric Society, 22 (1974), 529-535.
This author contends that the stereotypes of aging--unproductivity, inflexibility, and senility--need not be inevitable reactions of the elderly to their lives. An oral life review is an essential developmental task of old age that gives meaning and purpose to what one has obtained in a lifetime of learning and adapting.

Freimuth, Vicki S., and Kathleen Jamieson. Communicating with the Elderly: Shattering Stereotypes. Falls Church, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1979. ERIC ED 172 285
This book describes how stereotypes about the elderly have developed and how they tend to obstruct intergenerational communication. It also provides numerous classroom activities for heightening students' awareness of society's and their own perceptual biases toward the elderly, as well as how to improve their ability to interact meaningfully with elders.

Jenkins, Sara. Past, Present: Recording Life Stories of Older People. Washington, D.C.: National Council on Aging, 1978.
The author was a director of a senior citizens' center who carried out a "listening project" in which a group of older volunteers developed a procedure for tape recording informal life history interviews with elderly people. Methods, forms, and edited transcripts are included.

Kaminsky, Mark. "Pictures from the Past: The Use of Reminiscence in Casework with the Elderly." Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 1 (1978), 19-32.
The diagnostic and treatment implications of reminiscence are analyzed. Case histories are presented describing four different ways in which the memories of elderly clients are enlisted to help them cope with the present.

Tamir, Lois M. Communicating and the Aging Process: Interaction Throughout the Life Cycle. New York: Pergamon Press, 1979.
This book provides a comprehensive synthesis of research relevant to the dynamics of intergenerational communication, which would be useful to oral history practitioners. The bibliography is particularly complete.

Oral History and Family Heritage

Cutting-Baker, Holly, Sandra Gross, Amy Kotkin, and Steven Zeitlin. Family Folklore. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1976.
This is a practical guidebook on how to create family histories developed from the Family Folklore Program of the Office of American and Folklife Studies which gathered 2,000 interviews on folklore traditions within families.

Epstein, Ellen Robinson, and Rona Mendelsohn. Record and Remember--Tracing Your Roots Through Oral History. Washington, D.C.: Center for Oral History, 1978.
These authors present a pleasantly written, step-by-step guide for developing a set of family history tapes.

Zimmerman, William. How to Tape Instant Oral Biographies. New York: Guarionex Press, 1979.
This is a small workbook describing how historical data elicited from family members can be recorded and kept as a momento.

Popular Books Using Oral History

Terkel, Studs. American Dreams: Lost and Found. New York: Pantheon, 1980.
The latest in a series of highly edited and entertaining books by the same author that chronicle the personal stories and inner experiences of everyday Americans.

Wigginton, Eliot, ed. Foxfire. New York: Doubleday.
This is a series of books (seven at last count) reporting oral history investigations of Appalachian folkways conducted by high school students. They provide inspiration for students and teachers and teachers alike who want to get involved in historical research in local communities.

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